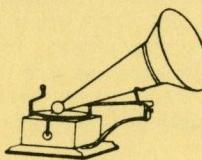


# Hillandale



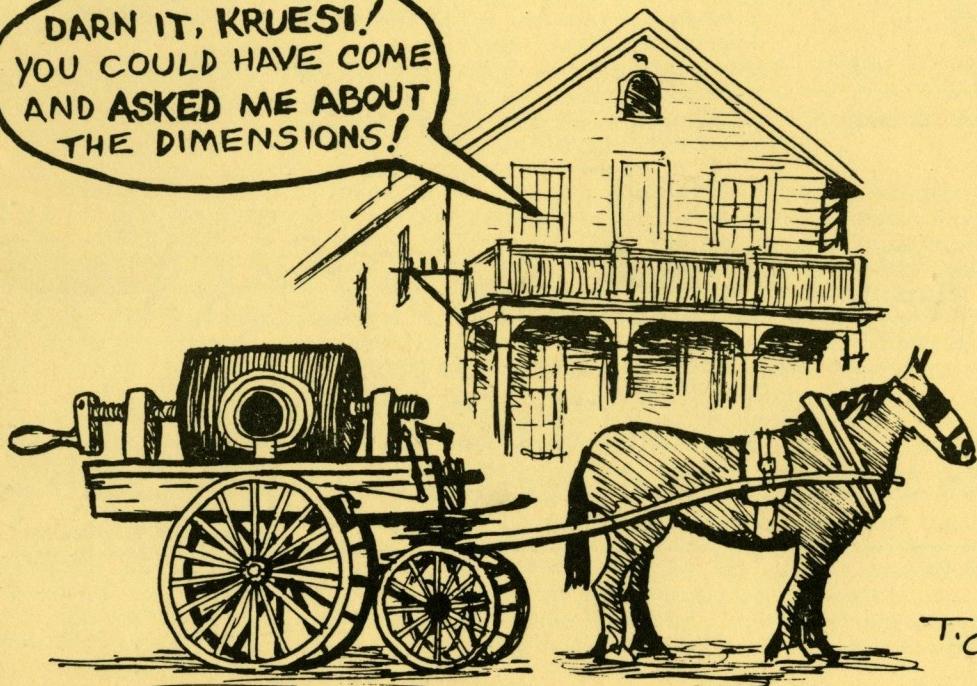
Journal of the  
City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

MARCH 85 No. 142

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DARN IT, KRUESI!  
YOU COULD HAVE COME  
AND ASKED ME ABOUT  
THE DIMENSIONS!



## THE HILLANDALE NEWS

Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society  
(founded 1919)

EDITOR Christopher Proudfoot,

DISTRIBUTION: D.R.Roberts,

### CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

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TRADE MARK

*Thomas A Edison*

National Phonograph Company, Ltd., Edison Works, London, N.W.

March 1911

# John McCormack

*The first part of a serialisation of Peter Martland's paper on the great tenor, presented at the September meeting of the Society at the Bloomsbury Institute.*

John McCormack came into the world 100 years ago last June, and he died on the 16th of September 1945. The 61 years that were given to him took him, a poor boy from Ireland, to the greatest opera houses of Europe and America, to become the leading tenor with such divas as Melba, Tetrazzini, Bori, Galli-Curci and Muzio. It took him into the concert hall where he became the greatest recitalist of the first half of the twentieth century, it took him to the recording studio and his recordings outsold everyone else's between 1910 and 1950. It brought him fame and fortune. Millions came to hear his voice over the years. Always a good son of the Church, he was ennobled by the Pope, and received many other honours. He remained here in Britain during the darkest days of the Second World War, coming out of retirement and singing for the Red Cross until his lungs literally gave out.

As an artist, McCormack aroused, and still arouses, great critical passions for the use to which he put his great gift. The 1954 edition of Grove says "(after 1924) he could no longer be taken seriously as a musician.... since in his later years .... he devoted his gifts too largely to sentimental and popular ditties..." On the other hand, Ernest Newman, writing in 1945, described McCormack as "a patrician artist ... with a respect for art that is rarely met with among tenors".

Three elements were essential props to the artistic and personal life of John McCormack. The first was Ireland, the second was his faith, and the third was his wife Lily. We can look at the impact of the last two later, but I want to begin by examining McCormack in relation to the Society in which he grew up in Ireland.

The widening of the franchise in 1884 had resulted in Ireland's returning eighty-seven of its 102 M.P.s to Westminster committed to the platform of Home Rule. The failure of Gladstone to enact such a measure in 1886 had led not only to the splitting of the Liberal Party, but also to a twenty-year Conservative/Unionist hegemony. With Ireland's political ideals thwarted, the intellectual elites who were committed to the cause of Home Rule sought other means of expressing Ireland's uniqueness as a nation. By exploring Ireland's past, its rich history, language and culture, its literature, music and even its sport, they engendered an Irish renaissance. The Gaelic League spearheaded this cultural assault, rescuing the Irish language and using the education system to permeate its ideas down to the people. Its impact was astonishing. Compare, for instance the men of letters of McCormack's generation: W.B.Yeats and James Joyce, both in a true Irish mould compared with G.B.Shaw and Oscar Wilde of the previous generation, who are seen firmly wedded to the English tradition.

John never his his Irishness and in his early years sang and recorded many songs reflecting the cause and struggle for Irish freedom. One of the first records he made for Odeon in December 1906 was the hymn of Irish nationalism 'A Nation Once Again'. His intensity and commitment is clear in this recording, although of the powerful and discordant orchestra he recalled "I sang along desperately, like a blackbird in a storm".

John McCormack was born the fourth of eleven children, five of whom survived to adulthood, to Andrew and Hannah McCormack, who had moved to Athlone in the Irish Midlands to work in the woollen mills, from their native Scotland. Andrew was foreman at the mills, so they were not among the poorest in the area, but it is clear that times could be hard for them. John, despite the many legends, was clearly an exceptionally bright boy. At the age of twelve he won a scholarship to become a boarder at Summerhill College, Co. Sligo, whence it was hoped he would go on to become a priest. In Ireland at that time few poor children were educated beyond twelve years, so John's training in languages, classics, science, mathematics, English and music to the age of eighteen had already set him apart from his contemporaries. His education was for him a liberating force and it stood him in good stead. His natural gift and flair for language gave him clear advantages over other singers, and coupled with his grasp of music and sight reading this gift enabled him to learn opera scores in days rather than weeks. This excellent grounding also gave him a resilience and independance, both of which formed an essential base on which to construct a career in music.

After Summerhill, John, whose natural singing voice had developed to the extent that he could realistically consider a career in singing, overcame parental opposition, left behind his earlier ambition of the priesthood, and snapped up an offer of a place in the Palestrina Choir at the Pro-cathedral in Dublin. Vincent O'Brien, the choirmaster, had spotted him, and went on to give him his first singing lessons and he entered John in the tenor section of the Feis Ceoil, or National Music Festival, in 1903. He carried off the gold medal.

In the following year, the silver medal was won by James Joyce, and they appeared on the same platform in concert in Dublin in 1904. Joyce refers to the concert in Finnegans Wake ... "When he (John) and Shem (Joyce) shared the twin chambers."

After his success at the Feis, John was clear in his mind about his future. He had to go to Italy for training. He started to raise money; he went to the St. Louis Exhibition in the U.S.A. and sang there. He went to London and sang in a number of concerts there too. The music correspondent of the Manchester Guardian in September 1945 remembered one: "... I had never heard his name when, forty or so years ago he came on to a Queens Hall platform at a Gaelic League concert and sang "Who Fears to Sing of '98" and "The Wests Awake". The hall was half-empty, but those of us who were there were entranced as we used to be entranced by the voice of Sarah Bernhardt in the theatre. It was as if a new magic had been born in Ireland."

McCormack began his recording career at a very early age. At about the time of the Queens Hall concert, he made the first of them, at the age of twenty. He made cylinders for Edison and Edison-Bell and discs for the G.& T. Fred Gaisberg leaves us a memoir, quoted in Northrop Moore's 'A Voice in Time':

*He struck me as an over-grown, under-fed, unkempt youth - loosely built, pale-faced, disorderly dark hair, untidy clothes, very bad teeth and worn down shoes ... and he was drinking too much ... His eyes were piercing dark and he had very little to say, but that little showed him decidedly confident of himself - almost aggressive.*

*We all took a serious interest in this rough diamond ..... While making his records he revealed to me that he would shortly be leaving for Italy to study with the well-known Maestro Sabatini.*

The voice revealed in one of these records ('Believe me if all those Endearing..,

G.&T. 3-2117) is immature and unfocussed, rather scoopy and lagubrious, with the lips barely moving. Yet there is no mistaking who we are listening to.

G.&T. paid £25 plus a gramophone and some records as its first fee. The money helped, and McCormack, after listening to Caruso's voice from the gallery at Covent Garden - a voice, he wrote, "Still ringing in my ears thirty-five years later" - went off to Milan to study for two years under Sabatini. He made his operatic debut on January 13th 1906 in L'Amico Fritz at the theatre in Savona, and as the Italians could never hope to get their tongues round the name McCormack, he used his fiancee's name and appeared as Giovanni Foli. Other small engagements followed, but McCormack failed to break into the musical firmament of Milan.

He married Lily Foley, who had won the gold medal in the Soprano section of the Feis in the same year that John had won his. As a partnership Lily, throughout John's life, helped to sustain and to give substance to John's art. When wealth and honours were showered on them, she acted as a restraining influence on John, whose extravagance, exuberance and zest for life at times took him too far. However, in 1906, married, with the birth of their first child expected, the couple settled in London. A few more cylinders were forthcoming from Sterling Records, but John was rebuffed by the G.&T. (although Gaisberg makes no mention of this, recalling simply that, when he approached the singer after his return from Italy, he was already tied to Odeon). Arthur H. Brooks, engineer and recording manager of Fonotipia-Odeon, offered John a contract for £150 p.a. for six years for up to twelve records per year. This was the beginning of McCormack's recording career as a trained singer.

1907 was not the easiest year for the young singer; engagements were few, and money was short. Perceval Graves remembered:

*When I first met him, he was a simple unobtrusive Bohemian, who rejoiced to wear a comfortable if rather shabby old squash hat on one side, as he strolled down the Strand with me, sucking sweets which he carried with him to curb the temptation to smoke..... Like Mozart, whose arias he interpreted so gracefully, he had a passion for billiards, which with snooker he found a first class corrective for overwork in the studio and the concert hall.*  
He got engagements to sing at ballad concerts, was taken under the wing of a patron, Sir John Murray Scott, gained an audition at Covent Garden and his first role. At 23 he was the youngest principle tenor ever to appear at Covent Garden. On October 26th 1907 he made his debut in Cavalleria Rusticana. Shortly afterwards he sang the Duke in Rigoletto and then Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni.

Over the next few years, John developed from being a good singer to being a great singer. His voice, always distinct, took in that marvellous ability to trill and to float notes. He developed his repertoire, adding The Barber of Seville, La Somnambula, Lucia, Faust, Romeo & Juliet, Don Giovanni, Manon and many others.

His acting developed, although he always admitted that he was "a rotten actor, about as good or bad as Melba". He appeared often with that great singer and toured Australia with her in 1911. He was a handsome young man, with a trim figure, and he was much in demand from the sopranos. Tetrazzini, in particular, had her eyes on him, as Lily recalled:

*His brightest operas were with Tetrazzini, who was kindness itself. She was quite taken by my handsome young tenor and never tried to hide it from me ...They sang some of the most superb performances I have ever heard breath for breath, note for note.*

Of one performance, John relates how Tet. left her corsets off; it was Traviata and in

the last scene she is dying. John rushed in and grabbed "a huge bundle of fat or what seemed like a couple of Michelin tyres." Although he clearly did not like Melba, he respected her art. The same applies to Melba's view of McCormack. On one occasion in Romeo & Juliet, John had 'died' and Nellie collapsed 'dying' on top of him. She landed heavily on his foot and as he tried to free it, Nellie hissed "Keep still, John" "Tableau, Tableau". John's retort, heard across the stalls, "Nellie! Will you ever get off me foot!"

(To be continued)

## HISTORIC MASTERS

On Page 119 of the December 1984 issue, mention was made of a forthcoming second issue of Historic Master recordings from the EMI Archives. This information was taken from an undated leaflet which appeared in the Hillandale in-file, but it must have been floating around somewhere for some months before surfacing, since it appears that the January/February delivery date predicted was for 1984! The set was duly produced, as was a further set in November 1984. The third set, numbered HMB 26 - 30, contains recordings by KASTORSKY, DAMAEV, KATULSKAYA, SMIRNOV, BORONAT, SIGNORINI and PARETO with MANURITTA. The price of the set is £25. Additionally, a single record, HMB 31, is available; this carries unpublished recordings by Clara Butt and Agnes Nicholls (O don fatale and Ocean, thou Mighty Monster respectively). Both have 'very minor but ineradicable faults' in the matrices. Further details from Historic Masters Ltd., [REDACTED] Brighton [REDACTED]

## OBITUARY

### W.A.CHISLETT

The record reviewer W.A.Chislett died in November, two months short of his 90th birthday. He must by many years have been the doyen of record reviewers everywhere, having started in The Gramophone way back in April 1925 in the acoustic days.

Members will recall that he was one of the Society's guest speakers at our 60th anniversary dinner in 1979, when he related in broad north-country tones how he was given his first phonograph as a boy in 1904, grew to own an Amberola and took to a Decca portable while in the trenches in France.

Even before 1925, W.A.Chislett's name can be found in talking machine periodicals, and right up to the present time he has written the sleeves for hundreds of l.p. records, and in his particular niche has done great service to the industry and the customer.

For something over ten years he has been a correspondent and friend, and I only wish I had known him ten years earlier. Much of W.A.C.'s interest lay in the military and brass band fields, where he maintained friendship with generation after generation of the leading figures, but he seemed equally at home with any type of music.

I believe he finished his working life as Town Clerk of Barrow-in-Furness, and was awarded the O.B.E. and an Honorary M.A.(Oxon) for services to music.

G.L.Frow

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

The article 'Concert or Grand' in the August 1984 issue has prompted me to write seeking advice on a machine in my collection. This is an Edison Concert machine, with the serial number C8376 on the Patent Plate and on the straight edge. The machine also has an Edison-Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. plate, but it came without a case.

On the front of the straight-edge, it has a device with 'on' and 'off' buttons, which raises a plate mounted on the front of the straight-edge, so as to lift the carrier-arm from the record when the 'off' button is pressed.

The machine came with a normal 2-inch mandrel and two carrier-arms. One of these was the earlier type with shaving attachment and reproducer adjusting-screw, which are absent on the other arm. The reproducer that came with the machine is a Model B, and there is also a recorder and the extension arm tube for playing standard cylinders under the Concert carrier-arm. This has the adjusting lever at the side.

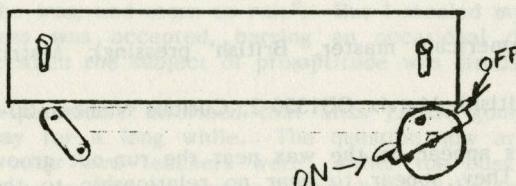
The winding handle is the normal black type, but with a 13-inch shank which I think is original. This and the on/off button suggest that the machine may have been a dictating machine in a floor-standing cabinet; if so, I would very much like to have a photograph of another one if anyone has an example, so that I can copy it.

I also wonder if anyone has any information on a cylinder company that issued language cylinders under the name 'International Phonograph Language School'? I have an indestructible cylinder which announces itself as the name above and then 'French Language Record No. 20' in a heavy French or Italian accent. It plays at about 60 rpm, and is very similar to a Lambert. It is black with a white under-surface, but with pink showing through in places. It has the standard Patent date of July 29 1902, but then Oct. 30 1894, a date I am unfamiliar with.

Yours sincerely, Rod Cornelius

*Mr. Cornelius' photographs, being in colour, were not suitable for reproduction, but in an attempt to clarify the description of the 'on/off' mechanism on his phonograph, here is a very rough sketch. It seems to me unlikely that an office dictating machine would have been made in Concert form, but as a high-quality musical recording machine it could have benefitted from an easy-to-use pause device. The slotted plate on the front of the straight edge is a common feature on early models of the 'spring Motor' type, providing an adjustable straight-edge for the carrier-arm.*

Ed.



Dear Christopher,

I would like firstly to thank Barry Williamson for his comments on my article on the introduction of Purchase Tax on records from 1940 onwards. Whereas I would not dream of entering into controversy with Barry Williamson on fiscal matters (and I have to call on professional help towards the resolution of my own), I was always of the opinion that the last column in the list shown on Page 105 of the October issue would be the Wholesale price, although more correctly I suppose it should have been headed as the Distributor's price. In my own experience of 78 buying at the time, this was the price my retailer paid to his record distributors, usually Lugtons, or Thompson, Diamond & Butcher.

There would be at least one or more profit steps between distributor and record factory, and no doubt some confusion has arisen in use of the words Wholesale and Distributor. Certainly, as a participant in a family manufacturing business at the time, I recall plainly the coming of Purchase Tax and that it so often revealed sensitive areas of middlemen's profits. I am grateful to Barry Williamson for his wider explanation of Purchase Tax and on the War Tax of 1915.

For the interest of readers whose memories don't go back quite that far, it should be mentioned that the Gramophone Company part of E.M.I. Ltd. always reserved just one or two of the prime dealers in each district for distribution of HMV records and instruments; these were sent out direct from the factory, and this persisted until around 1955 - I cannot recall the precise date - after the termination of agreements between E.M.I. and the American Columbia and R.C.A. Victor companies. These chosen dealers continued to buy their Columbias, Parlophones, Deccas etc. through the distributors mentioned above, and others, and in this way were HMV prices maintained, while side-street shops and market stalls could only deal in non-HMV records. However they would sometimes knock coppers off these discs, in some cases up to two shillings from a six-shilling record, but such bargains were spoken rather than advertised.

After the 'exclusive agency' ceased, HMV records began to appear on wire racks in all sorts of shops and the new supermarkets, and many of the long-established and rather old-fashioned music shops that had held the HMV franchise for many years decided it was time to give up trading, their owners died or retired and another trade moved into the building.

Yours sincerely, George Frow.

Dear Christopher,

Kingston-upon-Hull

For some time I have been bothered by not knowing the meaning of mysterious numbers which appear on HMV records - I am thinking of the 1920s and 30s. Here are some examples:

HMV B 55332 (American master, British pressing); Matrix A 45660; Curious Number 8-680.

HMV B 6061 (all-British); Matrix OB1350-2; Curious Number 30-7213.

The curious numbers appear on the wax near the run-out grooves, and are often also printed on the labels. They appear to bear no relationship to the matrix or catalogue numbers. They must have had some significance, probably only to the manufacturers (rather than, say, the wholesalers or dealers. After all, they were not even expected to

know about matrix numbers. Indeed the makers of minor labels such as Edison Bell, Imperial and Regal would have been most embarrassed if the trade and the public had understood matrix numbers and thus penetrated the disguises that matrix-leasing involved. How would such companies as ARC, Gennett and Vocalion have managed without this arrangement?)

Up to now, nobody - not even an Eminent Expert I have asked - has been able to explain these numbers to me, and set my mind at rest. Are there any readers who can throw light on the purpose of these numbers? What numbering system **was** used? Were they in correct sequence? Who knows the secret of the Black Magic box?

Yours sincerely, Paul Collenette.

### CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF THE CLOCKWORK ACOUSTIC - iii

M.John

In early childhood, I hated music. Like Jim Goodall, who hated loud noises, I was eventually rid of this fear by the gramophone.

Born on a small farm in the country, I had three weary miles to trudge to and from school daily. The first was over a very difficult terrain indeed - two streams, often flooded in winter-time, a bog and a rutted cart-track. It was therefore no wonder that I was habitually late at school - but, be it known, this was not solely due to my arduous journey.

The first lesson at our little country school after 9.0 a.m. assembly fro the senior standards was Music. Miss J..., our music teacher, a kindly enough soul when taking other subjects, was, to me at least, a real ogre when teaching music. Her method of acquainting us with the scales was to thump out a note on the piano, point at each one in turn with a request to name it. Although my hearing was excellent, it soon became apparent that I was tone-deaf, my reaction when the fateful finger pointed at being to bawl out 'Doh!', 'Lah!' or any other note I fancied. I was invariably wide of the mark. If subsequent ear-tweakings and head-thumpings were painful, infinitely more so was the ridicule of my fellow pupils, who seemed to have no more difficulty in recognising the various notes.

To avoid continued humiliation, I took to arriving at school when the music lesson was practically over. During inclement weather I was excused, but fine sunny mornings found me on the carpet, with threats, reprimands and detentions dished out by the head-master - "a man severe he was, and stern to rule". But I steeled myself to the treatment and in time my tardiness was accepted, barring an occasional derogatory remark and a glance in my direction, when the subject of promptitude was discussed.

One morning I was pleasantly informed that Miss J. had gone down with an illness that would keep her away for a long while. The question now arose as to who was to take us in music: the other two teachers were either too busy or unqualified and it devolved on the headmaster to find a solution. This he did the following morning, when he appeared at school with a little hornless gramophone under one arm and a box of 10-inch records under the other. A small table was placed in front of the class, and the machine set in motion upon it.

His collection included various national anthems, 'Land of Hope and Glory', 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and popular numbers of the period. We were invited to join in, we did so with gusto, revelling in the rousing choruses. Several passers-by tarried to listen, and to comment on the improvement in the singing of late. This continued for the duration of Miss J.'s illness.

Alas, the day dawned when she was able to resume her duties, and needless to say I reverted to my previous habit of playing truant, and found myself at the head-master's desk. I was told that I had no further excuse for being late, as my timekeeping had been exemplary when the gramophone was in session. But I sensed from his gentler admonitions and benign countenance that he had recognised in me a kindred sufferer from lack of musical talent. More than sixty years have flown by since then, but each detail of the Head's little Zonophone lives on fresh in my memory

#### LONDON MEETINGS

October 1984

Jim Goodall once again travelled down from Scotland to give us a talk and demonstration on the repair of soundboxes. Jim is all for the preservation of the best of old things, and pointed out that our Society is here to preserve and foster interest in the best of the past.

Not many people know the details of a soundbox; they are tricky to get right. The No 4 HMV soundbox usually gives crystal clear reproduction, but adjustment is critical. The stylus-bar must be free but without any loose play, and the gaskets must be in good condition. The No. 4 has a one-piece moulded gasket, which is much more difficult to replace than the conventional pair of tubes. Different examples were tried, on an HMV 461, a 103 and a 101.

An EMG soundbox has the stylus-bar mounted on knife-edges and held by leaf-springs. The diaphragm is aluminium with two concentric ridges, and the gasket protrudes at the back, so that the back-plate is not screwed up tight against the body and the tightness can be adjusted for individual tuning. Acoustic gramophones are not complicated and many repairs can be done by the layman, although tuning takes considerable practice.

November 1984

This evening was our annual 'Free-for-all', with a set theme of records connected with the contributor's home town.

A member born at Slough, not far from the Thames, started with Old Father Thames sung by Peter Dawson (who else?), which led naturally to Old Man River played by Jack Hylton. Closer to home was Bernard Miles talking in a Buckinghamshire accent. A member from St. Helens in Lancashire drew on the area's association with Sir Thomas Beecham. His father Joseph was Mayor there in 1899 and engaged the Hallé Orchestra. The conductor Hans Richter was unable to officiate, and so Joseph's son Thomas deputised. In 1915 Edna Thornton sang at the funeral of Joseph (O Rest in the Lord), but a copy of this record could not be found and we heard her singing Softly Awakes My Heart, followed by a Columbia of Sir Thomas conducting the Silken Ladder overture.

A member from Lewisham (not far from Eltham) presented a recording of Billy

Weedon's Band, who won the 1945 prize in the All Britain Dance Championships. From the Brent area, a member with an interest in cinema organs (amongst other things) mentioned the Willesden Empire, and the Christie Unit organ at the Granada. A recording of the latter played by Donald Thorne was played. Also in the area was the 1924 Wembley Exhibition, and a 1926 Homochord studio reconstruction of the Tattoo was played.

A member living at Twickenham had an easy task of finding suitable records, for Twickenham is mentioned once in the song Lighterman Tom (recorded by Harry Dearth in 1908) and Theophilus Marzial's song Twickenham Ferry was heard, sung by Maud Willby, soprano. A member from Kent chose an early electric outside recording (While Shepherds Watched, Rochester Cathedral Choir, 1925 Columbia) and followed up with the Margate Municipal Orchestra in The Donkey & the Driver (H.Leonard) on Velvet Face.

From Mill Hill we had a Will Hay record (Will Hay had an observatory in that area). Another presenter thought it fitting to have Schubert's 'To Music' sung by Isobel Baillie, and to finish, our Lewisham member gave us an excerpt from the 1933 Greenwich Night Pageant.

December 1984

On this occasion we welcomed Suzanne Lewis, our new Secretary, who is assistant Archivist at EMI. Her subject was the development of the HMV factory at Hayes.

It was realised towards the end of 1906 that the pressing plant in Hanover could not cope with the demand for records, and it was decided to build premises in England. Marshall Robinson was appointed architect and several sites were considered. After an inspection of the Hanover factory and consideration of various plans, a report was drawn up which recommended a single-storey factory at Hayes, close to the Grand Junction Canal and the railway. The tenor Edward Lloyd cut the first sod in February 1907.

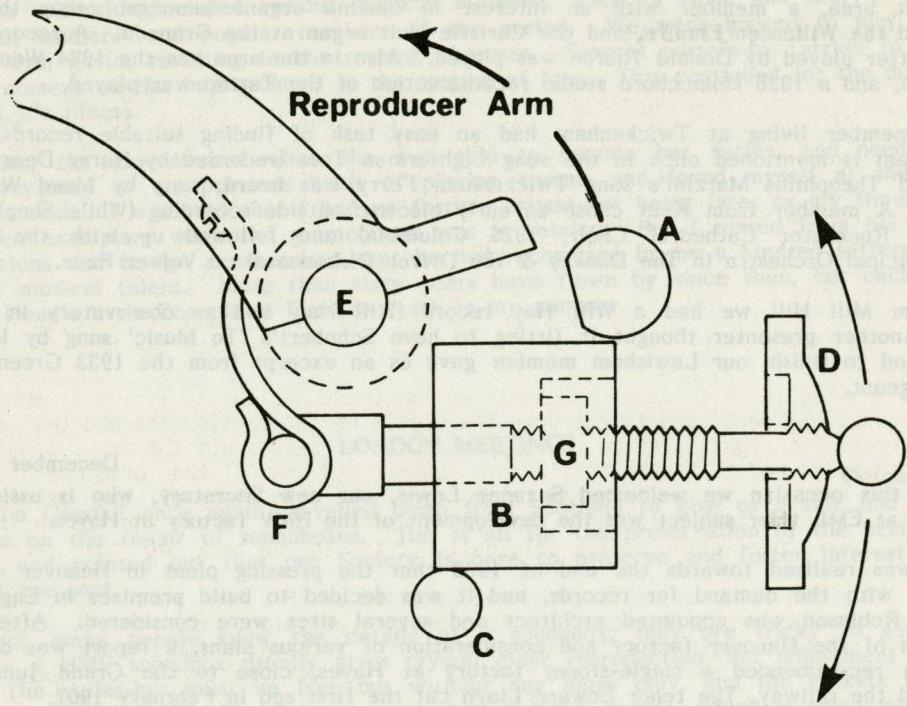
By May the building was well under way, and Melba laid a corner-stone of the power house. The factory was nearly complete by the end of 1907, and the first record was taken at Hayes in June 1908. Only one copy appears to survive, which was played to us, a tuneful march (title unknown), performed by the Black Diamonds Band. By November the monthly output of records was 165,000.

By 1910, difficulties in obtaining satisfactory cabinets from various sub-contracted firms led to a decision in August to build a cabinet factory. A manager was appointed and went to the Victor factory in America, where cabinet production was very satisfactory. Langdon Cole was appointed architect and by July 1911 Tetrazzini was laying the corner-stone.

At about the same time it was decided to move the firm's offices to Hayes, and after a Board Meeting the well-known architect Sir Reginald Blomfield was appointed to design a four-storey office block with room for expansion if needed. The building was complete, and the offices moved from City Road, by the end of 1911.

In 1912 it was decided to erect a workshop to manufacture motors and Langdon Cole undertook the design of a six-storey building in which production of motors and other mechanical parts started by mid-1913.

Many thanks to Suzanne for her efforts (and Ruth Edge's assistance) in bringing a 461 gramophone from Hayes, on which appropriate records were played during the talk, and for the many photographs of the buildings' progress.



Cross-section of the VARIOL attachment for Gems  
 (See Mike Field's article on the next page)

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#### LOCAL CONTACTS...

Member Robin Timms is anxious to make contact with other members who share his interest in Dance Bands of the Twenties, particularly any in his area: he lives at [REDACTED]

Talking of Robin Timms, a member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain whose speciality is arranging music for Polyphon discs, reminds me that that Society's Journal Editor, Robert Clarson Leach, has come up with another book, this time on a living musician, the concert pianist Marguerite Wolff. She made the first recording of Sir Arthur Bliss's Piano Sonata, and is particularly associated with that composer's works. The book, 'Marguerite Wolff', sub-titled 'Adventures of a Concert Pianist', is published by Artmusique Publishing Co., [REDACTED] The U.K. price is £12.50, and the ISBN number is 0 946444 01 3.

# TECHNICAL FORUM

Mike Field

The Variol Combination Attachment illustrated on Page 94 of the October 1984 issue of the Hillandale News is a clever device produced to meet the presumed demand from Edison GEM owners for a method of playing the 4 minute Amberol cylinders. The attachment consists of a reproducer carrier arm support rod, an assembly we will call the Variol Drive Assembly (VDA for short) and a threaded rod which can be mounted on and pivotted around the new support rod. In addition I presume a turnover stylus bar was provided to replace the 2 minute bar fitted to the Model C reproducer although I have never seen one in the metal so to speak. The illustration on page 94 shows the general arrangement set to play 2 minute records. The threaded rod can be seen on the right of the reproducer carrier arm support rod at the rear, while the object protruding underneath the threaded rod is the VDA.

The drawing in this issue represents an imaginary section as it would appear if a hacksaw had been used to cut down the middle of the carrier arm and the VA in a direction at right angles to the support rod. 'A' represents the cross section of the threaded rod, 'E' the carrier arm support rod and 'C' the original feed screw. The VDA is shown attached to the carrier arm in place of the original spring carrying the feed nut. (Note that it is necessary to remove the 1/8 in. rod and feed screw protection pulley originally fitted to the back of the carrier arm.)

The VDA consists of a threaded rod, pivotted at 'F', on which a toothed cylinder 'B' is free to rotate. In its operating position, the rod is angled downwards and the cylinder will move down the rod until arrested by the nut 'G' which is adjusted so that the inner face of the cylinder contacts the centre of the feedscrew 'C'. The rod 'A' is threaded 25 to the inch and the cylinder teeth are cut to mate with the rod; the feedscrew remains at the original 50 threads per inch. The sketch shows the device set to play 4 minute records. The rod 'A' is actually pivotted around the support rod 'E', ( see page 94 of the October issue) but the pivot arms are omitted for clarity. Thus the lower surface of cylinder 'B' rests on the feed screw 'C' and rod 'A' rests on the upper surface.

In its original state, ie before fitting the Variol attachment, one complete rotation of the feedscrew will advance the carrier arm by a distance equal to the "pitch" of the thread - in the case of the GEM, .020 in. In the Variol set up, one rotation of the feedscrew moves one tooth at the bottom of cylinder 'B' this distance and consequently, as the cylinder can rotate, a tooth at the top of the cylinder would also move this distance if it were free to do so. But since the teeth at the top of the cylinder are engaged with the threads of rod 'A', the cylinder, and therefore the carrier arm, is forced to move along the machine. To play 4 minute Amberols, the distance the distance per groove the carrier moves must be half the distance moved by the unmodified GEM playing two minute cylinders. This is precisely what does happen and the mechanical principle involved is similar to that of a simple lever. In this case the "lever" is the toothed cylinder where the top is fixed (ie the fulcrum) and the force is applied at the bottom. Since the ratio of the distance from the top and the bottom to the distance from the bottom to the mid-point of cylinder 'B' is 2:1, the centre, which is attached to the carrier arm will move half the distance travelled by the tooth at the bottom. Hence the carrier arm will move at the correct rate for 4 minute records.

For 2 minute operation, the threaded rod is temporarily hinged upwards and nut 'D' is screwed up until cylinder 'B' can no longer rotate and has been moved

along its support rod as far as it can go. When rod 'A' is released to swing downwards again, it will no longer engage with the cylinder teeth and it will just rest on the smooth rim of nut 'D'. Now the top of the "lever" is no longer fixed and the only effect of rod 'A' is to add a little weight to keep cylinder 'B' firmly in contact with the leadscrew 'C'. In this configuration, the VDA acts in exactly the same manner as a simple feed nut and the carrier arm will move at the correct 2 minute rate.

## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Mike Field.

The second meeting of the Severn Vale Branch at the new venue was a bit of a variety show. Mike Field brought along an example of the Variol 2 and 4 minute attachment fitted to a key wind GEM which he demonstrated with a bit of an explanatory talk. Laurie Wilson had prepared a Christmas Quiz on a theme of music and artists from the past. Out of a possible 24 points, the winner only managed 8 but received a valuable prize for his efforts - a 78 disc moulded into a bowl decorated with Christmas holly! Merle Gardner presented a short tape of private recordings of dubious moral content made by John Charles Thaver, Laurence Tibbett and Enzio Pinza. In the event the tape was even shorter than planned as Merle judged the offering by Pinza to be unsuitable as a lady was unexpectedly present! John Charles' efforts were a rendering of Old Man River suitably reworded which was recorded in the late 40s and a ditty called "Dear Lady" being a message to explain the drunken state of her husband. Tibbett's offering was a somewhat risque version of "Noel", while we never did hear what Pinza was to sing which made it all the more intriguing. Being the festive season, Merle ended with a couple of Christmas songs: "Silent Night" by Rosa and Carmela Ponselli recorded at Rosa's home (now a museum) in 1954 and "O Holy Night" by Jussi Bjoerling from a 1940 Swedish broadcast.

The East Fife meeting on the 7 Nov. provided a Western style hill-billy evening which was presented by Bud Billings and Carson Robinson mostly from 10" Zonophones. As usual the opportunity was taken to compare the performance of various machines - in this case, 4 HMV and 2 Columbia portables.

The programme for the Midland's Branch meeting was a two part affair given by Chairman Eddie Dunn. The first was devoted to a recital of songs and arias on cylinders played on Gerry Burton's Amberola 30. Some 10 recordings were heard on blue and royal purple amberols featuring such artists as Kurz, Bonci and Arral. The second part of the programme, also on cylinders, concentrated on music hall and comedy. Gerry Burton's Red Gem was called into service for this music (perhaps the Amberola was too upper class) and the artists included Jones, Chirgwin, Champion, Merson and others. A well balanced programme with something for everyone!

Next year's Phonofair and AGM will be organised by the Midlands Branch at the Teachers Centre Oldbury. The date will be the 14th of September so put it on your social calendar now! The Midlands Branch always put on a very good do and the venue is very accessible from the M5 Motorway, so come one and all for a good day out!

# REVIEWS

## WOODWORKING TOOLS Christopher Proudfoot and Philip Walker

O.K., I know: this review is all about tools and H & D should be all about gramophones, phonographs, records and so forth. But there are several very good reasons for reviewing this particular book in this Society's journal ... not least of which is the fact that one of the co-authors of 'Woodworking Tools' is Chairman of the Society and Editor of this magazine. But it's not mere vulgar nepotism which leads me to pen these words. There is also the fact that tools - especially of the woodworking variety -- are becoming extremely collectable and as the book's jacket 'blurb' states: "The book aims to introduce the novice or would-be collector to the subject ... the accent is on collecting tools rather than their history." And as Christopher Proudfoot observes in his introduction to the book, much of the surprisingly large amount of literature already published on the subject is aimed at the established collector who wants more detailed information than would appeal to the novice collector.

A further reason for the book's appeal to Society members must the attraction of tools themselves as collectable items. I suspect that had gramophones et cetera never been invented, most Society members would still have to collect something ... butterflies, beermats ... or what about woodworking tools? After all, most of us who acquire obsolete talking machines find the need to restore, repair or replace certain pieces of cabinet from time to time. I write this with an HMV Model 511 cabinet gramophone at my elbow. It needed a new piece of decorative beading which I laboriously carved with a scalpel. One of the planes in Plate 27 on Page 33 would have done the job a treat. And one of the lock mortice chisels on Page 130 would have eased the problem of cutting a slot in a new section of leg on a Bijou Grand.

The book takes the reader on a wellcharted course, starting with the field offering the greatest scope - that of planes. Apart from the normal planes found in every workshop, the book explores the many variations of the tool, with marvellous names like ploughs, fillisters and rabbet planes; and the very specialised tools from the tiny violin-maker's plane, measuring less than an inch in length to the six-foot-long cooper's plane. The reader is conducted from chapters on the traditional wooden planes to the British metal planes and on to the American-type metal planes which really revolutionised the tool industry and put well-made mass-produced woodworking tools within the reach of everyone.

But if should not be thought that the old wooden planes are out of the financial reach of the ordinary collector. Although some so-called antique experts put fancy price labels on old tools, it is possible, for example, to buy a tool lot at auction and pay only a pound or two each for moulding planes. And for your money get a genuine antique which is - in most cases - identifiable by its maker's name and therefore dateable. And there aren't many antiques for which THAT claim can be made!

The somewhat lengthy section on planes is followed by a chapter contributed by Christopher Proudfoot's co-author, Philip Walker. This covers decorated and dated tools, many of the more exotic of which come from the mainland of Europe.

The book then turns to braces and other drilling tools and I have to admit that after the bewildering array of planes it was almost a relief to enter the relatively un-

cluttered world of hole-boring implements. The final chapter, 'Other Tools', covers everything from saws and screwdrivers to spirit levels and spindle-moulders (treadle-operated).

At £15, 'Woodworking Tools' is not cheap -- but there again, by today's standards it is not too expensive, especially taking into account the quality printing, the illustrations -- many in colour -- and the superior binding. Regrettably one of the full-page colour illustrations has been printed upside down ... but unless you know your braces you would not notice, and there are one or two typographical errors. But those points are merely reviewer's pedanticisms. If there is one criticism of the book, it is the lack of explanatory diagrams. I felt in several places that a labelled diagram would have saved the sometimes rather tortuous explanations needed to clarify particular complications.

But that minor niggle apart, I shall be ever grateful to Proudfoot and Walker for telling me all about side-fillisters, wheeler's bruzzes, cooper's shaves and bung ticklers! You want to know what they are? Well, get yourself a copy: the book, "Woodworking Tools", is published by Phaidon-Christie's in the Christie's Collectors Series at £15.

Colin Johnson.

#### NORWEGIAN ODEON

#### Norsk Grammofonplatte-Historie, Odeon 1912-27 and 1927-39

This two-volume listing of the Odeon records issued in Norway has been sent to us by its author, Member Vidar Vanberg. Volume 1 begins with a historical introduction (in Norwegian), and this and the catalogue section are illustrated with record labels and recording personalities. This excellent production will be of interest mainly in Scandinavia, if only because of the language barrier, but any serious student of recorded music should obviously have a copy on his shelves. In the later years of the period covered, there were a number of English and American recordings included - names like Nat Gonella, Harry Roy and even Victor Silvester keep cropping up. Recording dates are not given; just catalogue number (and another number, in brackets, of which the purpose escaped me), followed by artist and titles. There is an index of both these latter.

The price is 140 Norwegian Crowns, which (writing back in October) Mr. Vanberg gave as equivalent to £13. However, he offers a very generous 25% discount to C.L.P.G.S. Members, giving a price of £9 post paid, when payment is made in advance. Write to

[REDACTED]

Norway.

## SOME LAST KNOCKINGS

A few 78 r.p.m. listings reviewed by Frank Andrews

Four publications have come to me from Record Information Services, [REDACTED] Chessington, Surrey KT9 1UZ, England, which are companions to the last of the Decca "F" prefixed series, which I reviewed recently.

The first, Record Information No. 1 (£2.25 post paid), which was the first of what was to be a quarterly periodical, lists numerically the complete Vogue V 9000 series of 10-inch records, which were first issued in 1948. A 45 r.p.m. alternative later became available, and the last 78 was issued as V 9157 in September 1959; the series then continued as 45 r.p.m. only, the name changing to Vocalion in 1963.

Also listed are Atlantic 45 r.p.m. discs (circa 1964-1971) and the 12-inch mono l.p.s of the London (American) label have the first issues listed, from HA2000 to 2167. These are continued in Record Information No.2 (unfortunately misprinted on its cover as No. 1). The main listing in No. 2 is of the Vogue (Coral) records in the Q2000 to Q(7)2497 series extant from August 1954 to December 1967, but the last 78 r.p.m. was 72384 issued in December 1959; from then on the series was 45r.p.m. only.

Two other 78 r.p.m. discs are listed, from the Warner Brothers label, WB1 and WB10, from the first of the six series of 45r.p.m. only. Additionally, the short-lived Salvo records, current in 1962, are given in full, and there is an article called 'Australian Interlude'. This deals with the Festival Company, operating in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s.

Both these publications give thorough histories with reference to the companies involved in the recording and manufacturing of the series listed. There are also extensive illustrations of the labels, and the matrix systems are enumerated, allied with the sources of many of the recordings, which originated with minor companies. Promotional and test pressings, top of the charts successes and special sleeves are other items among miscellaneous information. (Issue 2 is also £2.25)

The third publication I have is 'British Capitol 45 r.p.m. Records'. This is by Paul Pelettier, who runs Record Information Services, and it costs £2.75. It does include the last of the 78 Capitols, which continued as an alternative when Decca introduced the 45s in October 1954. Under EMI, Capitols continued to be pressed in 78 form until April 1958, after which date only selected items were made as 78s. The whole series had begun in November 1953 at CL14000 with Decca in control, and finished in May 1981 with EMI Music Ltd. at the helm, at CL16198, although there was a break in the series when EMI took control. All manner of short series and promotional discs are listed in both the 78 and 45 categories. It is not a complete catalogue of the Capitol 78s as the numbers start at CL14000, just before the first 45s, but it is complete with respect to the latter. A comprehensive history, with label illustrations and matrix information and other miscellaneous items make this a definitive production.

The fourth and last item is the London and London American records of 1949 to 1982 catalogue, listing all the 78 and 45 issues. This has also been compiled by Paul Pelettier, and the textual matter is as comprehensive as the Capitol catalogue. The numbers run from 500 to 1232 and from 8001 to 10582, and all were issued as 78s up to 9190, issued in September 1960. Additionally, this includes the London Calypso 78r.p.m. series and a London Export series, four of these latter being 78s, plus a British Felsted series of thirty discs of 78/45 speeds. The price of this listing is £4. There are no artist indices in any of the four publications.

# POINTS & QUERIES

Columbia Cinema Records (33rpm):

Having discovered the existence of these early l.ps., I have managed to acquire an example: YB4 Regal Cinema Orch/Emanuel Starkey: Melodious Memories (Herman Finck). (Matrix nos. AXD 3/4)

I have been struck by the completely different recording characteristic used on this record. The use of the standard simple electrical replay for 78s is quite obviously wrong: the lack of bass and the sharply accentuated treble requires a playback very similar to today's l.ps. I wonder if perhaps the record/playback characteristic is the same as that on the first microgroove l.ps. - also produced by Columbia, in 1948?

Has anyone seen mention of this possibility in any publication?

Columbia Catalogue number prefixes:

Collectors will be familiar with the change made by Columbia from the L and D prefixes and unlettered series to LX and LB (for light blue), DX and DB (for dark blue). These numbers applied, of course, to British issues: there were equivalent series in other countries:

France:	LFX	LF	DFX	DF
Germany:	LWX	LW	DWX	DW
Australia:	LOX	LO	DOX	DO
Switzerland:	LZX	LZ	DZX	DZ

and so on, with various other additional series for local use.

Now it is interesting to note that, although LB and DB obviously suggest Light Blue and Dark BLue for the British 10-inch issues, the B can obviously be taken also to stand for British, so that by analogy with the foreign series, the British 12-inch records should really be prefixed LBX and DBX. Of course they are not ... BUT I have:

DBX10 NQHO/Wood: Hungarian Rhapsody no 2 pt. 3 (Liszt); Bach Partita in E (arr Wood)

which is the same as DX 10. However I can find no reference to the DBX numbering in catalogues or advertisements. So, how long did this (more consistent) arrangement last? How many records were issued with the DBX prefix? Were there any LBX records? To make matters worse, I have seen records with the DBB prefix instead of DB. I wonder if there were for example LFB and DFB records in France - or perhaps LBF and DBF; you can see the sort of mes they could have got into, with B for blue and B for British. It may be just as well that Columbia changed their minds, except that they ended up with 10-inch DBs when HMV had 12-inch ones! Ah, well.

British Phototone:

Can anyone give me any information about this type of record? It was obviously used to accompany early sound-films. Mine has a chrome-yellow label printed in black; it is edge-start, 12 inch and plays at 78 rpm.

No. 3928 Reel no 5 Item: second Ttile: Serenade SANDLER

The violinist (presumably Albert Sandler) comes over very well on what must be quite an elderly electric recording. The disc is single-sided, with a slightly rubbed back. Did they precede Vitaphone in this country?

Peter G Adamson

# GENUINE Edison Bell Records.

PART 2

by Frank Andrews

New contract work during 1912, besides the large orders for the Winner company, were for the Manufacturers' Accessories Co. Ltd.'s New Empire Record, the Excelda Double-sided Record for Adelbert Bornand of Bishopsgate and Gramophone Records for Curry's Cycle Stores.

Under the new patented process the Velvet Face records were reduced in price to 2s.6d. and in size to 10 inches in February 1913 and were given a newly-designed label in a brighter red and gold. Fifty-seven extra Velvet Faces were put into the catalogue, made up from 114 Bell Disc masters, the Bell Discs having had their last issues in December 1912 to a catalogue which extended over 500 issues since May 1908. Both the Velvet Face and The Winner labels bore the legend of the 1912 patent from this date.

The Winners had reached their 500th issue within the year and a total of 678,681 copies were sold between July 1st 1912 and June 30th 1913. The first 12-inch records to come from the Edison Bell works were put on sale in July 1913. These were red and gold labelled Velvet Faces numbered in a 600 catalogue series and sold for 4s. each. Only forty-three catalogue numbers were used during the fifteen months in which they were given new issues. With the first 12-inch issues, J.E.Hough Ltd. found it necessary to apologise for the design of the envelopes for its Velvet Face records. This included the Royal Coat-of-Arms, to which they had no right: they had no warrant to supply any member of the Royal Household with machines or records. The coat-of-arms was subsequently overprinted in red with the message, 'We are reminded that we are not warrant holders. We only claim that we make the best records and we deserve the honour though we have it not.'

In December 1913 mention was made of the first recordings to be taken outside the Hough recording studios in London, when it was reported that a recording team had gone to Sandbach in Cheshire to record the Foden Motor Works band.

Additional contract work had extended to New Zealand during 1913, when Minstrel and Herald Records were pressed to the order of a Mr. Pidgeon there.

The works continued to be enlarged. At January 1914 the original factory was being extended on to an adjacent vacant plot which was to give added facilities for the inspecting, finishing and testing of Velvet Face and The Winner records. Another building was also being erected to house a recording studio with a wing for a galvano department. In addition the directors had acquired another plot of freehold land, next to the main factory, on which a building was to be constructed for the manufacture of Ebonitis, a thermo-plastic material to be used in the manufacture of discs, electric light switches and other artefacts. For this purpose, J.E.Hough Ltd. founded a company called Ebonitis Ltd., capitalised at £10,000. More new presses were being installed in the main factory.

On January 15th 1914, Leon Lebowich, proprietor of the Regent and Rifanco trademarks as applied to machines and records, wrote the following letter to J.E.Hough:

"I have your letter of yesterday's date informing me that Winner records are patented and warning me not to sell under 1s.6d. each.

I do not know on what grounds you received the patent considering that the invention of the disc does not emanate from your brain and that anything in the making of discs is imported, initiated and pirated from abroad, especially Germany.

Still, you probably managed to gull the ignorant Patent Office official and now have the authority of the law on your side, to which we must bow.

Well, I do not mind so much your warning me not to sell Winner discs under 1s.6d. each in future, neither do I resent the demand for an undertaking not to continue selling below the stipulated price. As a matter of fact, I have not sold any Winners at all in my warehouse lately and your claim of having received a catalogue from me here of Winner records is a lie.

Be that as it may, you know that the factors will not supply me with your stuff, as you prevented them from doing so a year or so ago.

You did have a Patent then; you were only too glad that the sale of your Winners should be taken up.

But I exist and am doing well without your help. But you must be doing very badly if you have the time to occupy your mind with worrying people about a phantom grievance. You must be in need of advertisement, like the Columbia sharks.

I will not be bullied by you or by anybody else and while I promise not to retail the patent Winner under 1s.6d. each, I do not want you to advertise my name like you did the others. You are not entitled to it.

I also express my utter contempt of your remark, all of a sudden, that you will take immediate action against me. For this, Hough, you are a dirty dog and, though I do not know you personally, I will also take action if ever I am confronted with you.

If this is the kind of message you have to send out for the New Year, well I can only reciprocate, wishing you a year as black as your records.

(signed) Leon Lebowich, 120 Old Street, E.C."

That letter confirms that Winners were then selling at 1s.6d. The reduction from 2s. had occurred in the previous September in response to practically every other competitor who had put out their own brands of cheap discs priced at 1s. or 1s.1d. for the standard 10-inch size. J.E.Hough Ltd. was the only major company not to indulge in such a low priced disc, and their sales were up by a quarter of a million at January 1914 over the corresponding six months period of a year earlier. The Velvet Faces were then said to be made of the same homogeneous substance throughout, having no surface skins which needles might penetrate.

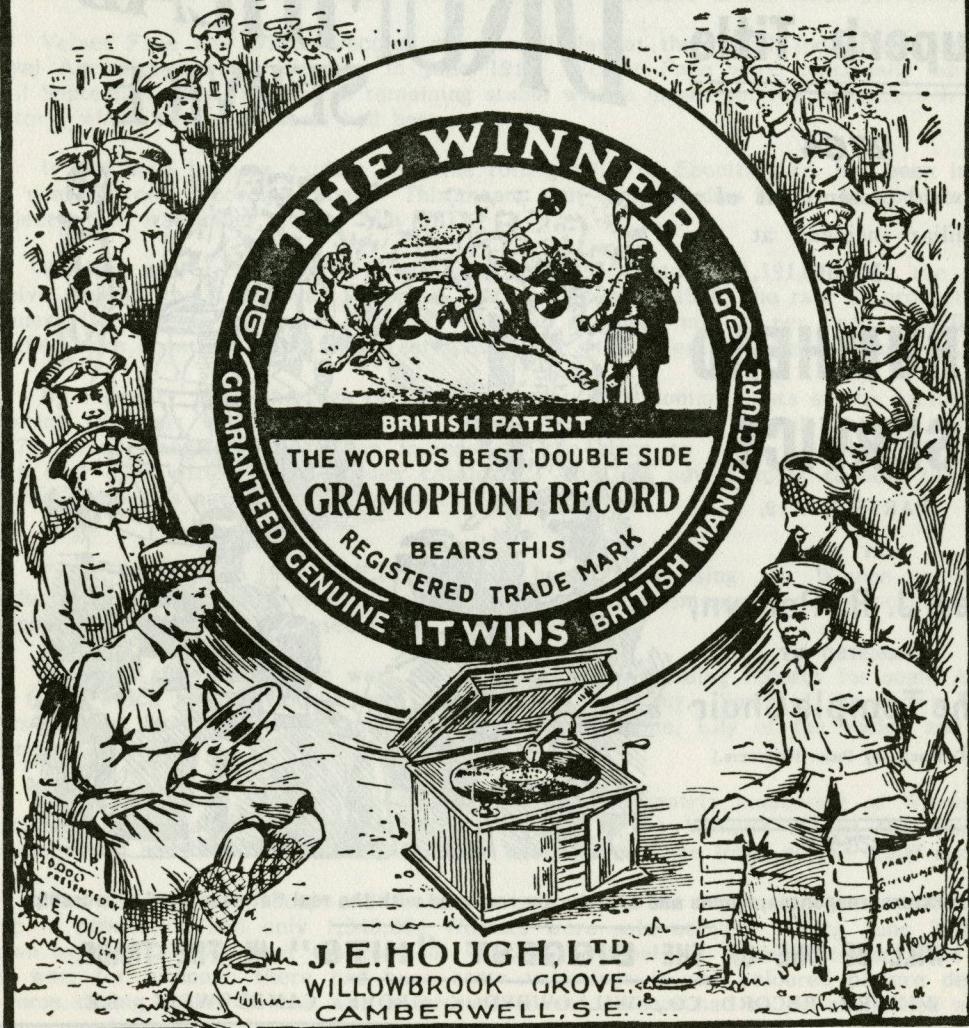
War was declared in August 1914 and J.E.Hough Ltd. ceased issuing any new Velvet Faces after those of October, in spite of the fact that an announcement declared that a brilliant new list was to be published, to include patriotic titles. A revised Velvet Face catalogue did remain extant throughout the war, however. Much of the factory was changed over to war work and the records were put out only as The Winners.

Our Sailor Boys have enjoyed, and still do enjoy the Records we have sent to them, as is proved by the very many letters of appreciation and thanks we receive from time to time. We are now supplementing our gift of

**14,000 RECORDS TO THE FLEET,**  
by a further gift of

**20,000 RECORDS TO THE ARMY.**

Our offer has been accepted by the War Office, which has consented to undertake the distribution of the various cases containing these Records to Camps, Hospitals, Convalescent Homes and, generally, to the various units of our Army, at home and abroad.



# WINNER RECORDS.

**ANOTHER**  
Superb Title

**2764**

A vivid presentment of a familiar incident at the Front.

## **DRUMHEAD SERVICE**

PARTS 1 & 2,

BY THE

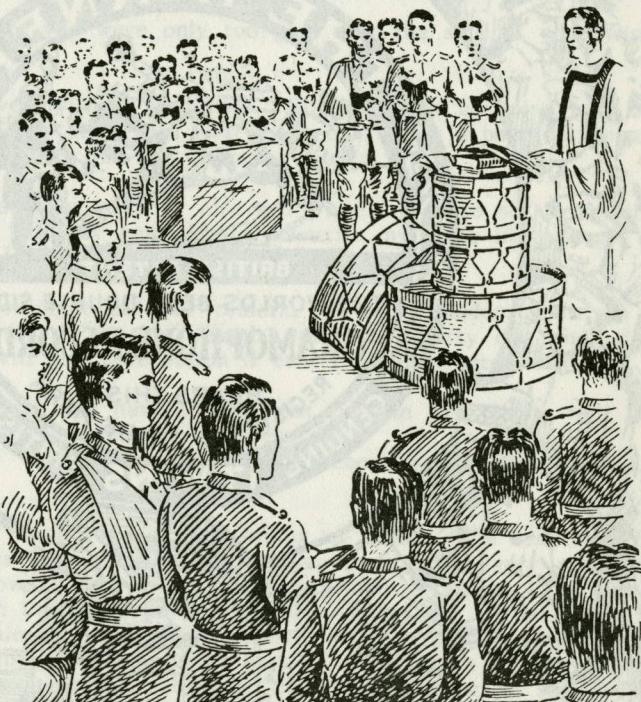
**Rev. J. R. Parkyn,**

ASSISTED BY

**The Temple Choir**

(Conducted by PROF. BENNETTS.)

## **DRUMHEAD SERVICE**



The prayers, responses, hymns and address are rendered with the real "atmosphere" of worship.

**WILL BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST "HITS" IN THE TRADE.**

WINNER RECORD CO., WILLOWBROOK GROVE, CAMBERWELL, S.E.

All the profits from the sale of the September Winners went as a subscription to the National Relief Fund and, next month, in response to an appeal for old records for those serving in the Royal Navy, James Hough presented 20,000 new discs, free of charge, with 500 Edison Bell Discaphones as well. The another 500 machines were sent at the personal request of Sir John Jellicoe, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet.

The first revised Velvet Face catalogue was published in 1915, with fresh pressings made in Ebonitis. These were "The best, smoothest and most durable gramophone records yet made". Dealers were requested to suspend all orders until the new catalogue had been delivered. It was claimed for the discs that the services of prominent artists had been secured, but if there were any new recordings added to the catalogue, these have not yet been found or documented. They were not advertised in the trade periodicals.

Velvet Face and Winner records were on display at the British Industries Fair at the Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington in June 1915. Velvet Face were continually advertised until September 1916, the prices remaining stable with a direct service to dealers from the factory, where new showrooms had been opened.

It had soon become evident that the rolling mills of Ebonitis Ltd. had been installed too near the new recording rooms. This meant that other studios had to be constructed, a project which was under way by May 1915.

Winners sold from July 1914 to June 30th 1915 totalled 1,191,826. In the ensuing twelve months, the figure was 1,792,113, and by December 1916, the rate of production of Winners (then being made of Ebonitis) was put at three million per year. 100,000 had by then been donated to the armed services, along with several hundred Discaphones.

By February 1917, shortage of labour and war work commitments at the factory were creating problems with the supply of records to the Winner Record Co. Ltd. In April 1917, James Hough announced an increase in the price to 1s.8d. At May 1917, there were over 2,000 titles in the Winner catalogue. The last advertisement to bear the Winner Record company's name was in August 1917.

From September 1917, J.E.Hough Ltd. began advertising the Winner as its own product (their name had previously appeared in the advertisements on a few occasions). In October, the price was increased to 2s.

At some time during the war, the company began pressing records for some Australian firms which had previously been supplied from Germany. Some of the known labelled discs pressed from Edison Bell matrices were Excellophone, Lily of the Valley and Rexophone.

After December 1917 it appears that the special matrix numbering of Winners was terminated, then almost at the 2,300 mark. All future Winners shared the numbering system which had been in use for Bell Discs and Velvet Face (then at the 5,500 mark).

The shortage of labour and materials caused by the continuing war resulted in a drop in production and only 1,946,864 Winners were sold at year ending June 30th 1918 (down by over 200,000 over the previous year). The labels of Winners also suffered during the war, for although there had been some variations in the coloured picture depicting a horse racing scene, as the war progressed so the colours had to be abandoned and the picture was printed in monochrome, either sepia or pale green.

During 1917 and 1918, Winners and Velvet Faces were advertised in the U.S.A. through the pages of the Talking Machine World, the leading trade periodical in America. Here, the Velvet Faces were kept before the public through the advertisements of John G.Murdoch & Co. Ltd. up to February 1919.

#### THE POST-GREAT WAR ERA

A development of the Edison Bell business after the war was the closing of contracts with European businesses. One of the first of these, circa 1918-19, was made with Ernest Rolf of Stockholm, who introduced his Rolf Winner Success label. The post-war contracts were to include original recording sessions for the contracted work, besides the continuing use of existing matrices at the factory.

During 1919 the Winner record label underwent a complete change in design. The race-track scene was abandoned and the colours changed to scarlet and gold. The upper half of the label depicted in colour a single horse and jockey and some railings. At about this time Winner records began to circulate overstuck with such labels as The Pilot Record (in red), or Tip-Top Record (in violet and gold), for unknown proprietors. The mail order firm J.G.Graves & Co. Ltd., of Sheffield, were selling Winners overstuck with mauve and gold Ariel Grand Record labels. In the case of these records with overstuck labels, it is most likely that the company was thus disposing of surplus stocks.

Shortage of labour and government restrictions on materials continued well into the immediate post-war period, increasing the cost of production and, in consequence, retail prices of records of all makes. Winners rose to 3s. in September 1919. Sales for the year ending June 30th had reached an all-time peak only one short of 2,160,000. The popularity of the Winner continued throughout 1920. During this period, the label began to carry the place of manufacture round the lower edge. By January 1921 the factory was operating a 24-hour working day.

In the Spring of 1921, Lord Baden Powell and some Boy Scouts and Wolf Cubs made a number of recordings for J.E.Hough Ltd. Previously, recordings of historical interest from the Edison Bell works had been few, apart from the music hall artistes. In retrospect one remembers the talk on physical fitness given by Jack Johnson when he was still world heavyweight champion, and the 'cello solos made by Master John Barbirolli.

In September 1921, the company re-started its advertisements in the Talking Machine World in North America, for the 192 season. At home, the Winners were reduced to 2s.6d. in October, when two new series of Edison Bell Velvet Face Records were introduced in the middle of the month.

(To be continued)

#### DIAMOND DISCS - SOME LATERAL THINKING

The relationship between Edison's electrically recorded Diamond Discs and his lateral-cut records has long been a subject of interest to me. Recently, thanks to the kindness of our President, George Frow, I was able to establish that 'Pagan Love Song' on Diamond Disc 52639R and its lateral equivalent on Needle Type 14051R are from the same take. On the other hand 'Theme Song Waltzettas' on the reverse of both discs is certainly not from the same take. The proof that both versions of 'Pagan Love Song' were from the same take was not easy to establish and what follows is due to the dedicated work of Peter Cox, to whom all thanks are due.

It had been thought that Edison's laterals played at 78.8 rpm but to match 'Pagan Love Song' on lateral with its Diamond Disc equivalent the latter had to be revolved not at 80 rpm but at 81.4. Conversely, to match the Diamond Disc at 80 rpm with its lateral equivalent it was necessary to revolve the lateral at 77.4 rpm.

To prove the matter beyond doubt, with great skill and patience, Peter Cox married on tape half the performance of the Diamond Disc with the lateral. The change-over is chiefly notable for the improved base response of the lateral recording though, of course, it may be that whereas the lateral was the fruit of recent development the hill and dale recording process may not have benefitted by such later development.

What would be useful now would be a comparison of the two types of disc of the same take with the same take on Blue Amberol. Certainly, Blue Amberol 5665 and Diamond Disc 52510 ('Toymakers Dream'), neither of which I have, could be compared with advantage with Needle Type 11043, which I do have. Similarly, 'Doin' the Raccoon' on electrically-recorded Blue Amberol 5656 (to which I have access) could be equated with Diamond Disc 52448. Perhaps some member of the Society could help by providing either discs or cylinders to prove perhaps the existence of the same take on the three media - Blue Amberol cylinder, Diamond Disc and Needle Type disc.

I should be pleased to hear from any member of the Society who has experimented in the manner above and to know if they have reached the same conclusions.

Joe Pengelly

### CARUSO AND TETRAZZINI - at the Alhambra

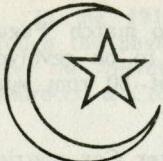
by David Trigg

The talking machine in one form or another played its part on the music hall stage. A typical example of a billing came to light recently among some old scrapbooks containing a large quantity of programmes of London's Alhambra Theatre. The programme for the week commencing Monday 15th November 1909 lists item 5 as 'THE AUXETOPHONE'. Using compressed air for amplification, this must have filled the theatre with the ringing sounds of the legendary singers. Patrons at the Alhambra were treated that week to ... "the wonderful voice records of Signor Caruso singing Vesti la giubba from 'Pagliacci' and Madame Tetrazzini 'Carnival of Venice' ... followed by The Brothers Artois, a Comedy Bar act! Other turns on the same bill included a Coon singer and dancer, Jury'S Imperial Pictures and American Musical Comedy Queen Ethel Levey. Variety indeed! Pasted on the page which contains this old programme is a cutting taken from an un-named newspaper of a letter written to the Editor by a Mrs. A.Bean of Sidmouth. She recalled for the readers of the day a simple tribute which she witnessed shortly after Caruso's death:

"I was staying with my parents at Hove, and one warm Sunday evening we went to the pier which was crowded with people sitting in chairs or strolling round the bandstand where a concert was in progress. We were surprised when the bandmaster announced that the next item would be a GRAMOPHONE RECORD. But when he went on to say that it was a record of Caruso singing from 'Pagliacci', the evening strollers stood still, most of the sitters stood up, men removed their hats, and all stood with bowed heads as the beautiful voice poured out into the night from the Gramophone."

It is quite likely that this outdoor performance was also by compressed air amplification via the Auxetophone. Certainly it was a novel attraction, and enabled some of the greatest singers to appear in some rather odd places.

(See overleaf:



# Alhambra Theatre

CHARING CROSS ROAD AND LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON.

Managing Director—ALFRED MOUL.

Business Manager & Secretary,  
H. Woodford.

Treasurer,  
A. E. Corrick.

Stage Manager,  
Clarence Hunt.



The  
National  
Variety  
Theatre.

## PROGRAMME.

Subject to Alteration at the Discretion of the Management.

Maitre de Ballet,  
Signor Alfredo Curti.  
Musical Director,  
Geo. W. Byng.  
Sub-Conductor and Leader,  
Julian Jones.

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Julian Jones.

Programme for Week commencing Monday, November 15th, 1909.

1.	OVERTURE	7.55
MARCH	"PER LA GUERRA"	L. Carrelli
	Before and during the Overture a series of Novel and Interesting Pictures will be shown by the World's Advertising Co., Ltd., of 11, Old Jewry Chambers, B.C.	
2.	AMOS HOWARD	8.0
	Coon Singer and Dancer	
3.	FRANK LE DENT	8.10
	Burlesque juggler	
4.	ON THE HEATH	8.25

### NEW REVUE DIVERTISSEMENT.

Produced by Miss ELISE CLERC.

From a Scenario arranged by FRED BOWTER.

Music Composed, Selected and Arranged by GEORGE W. BYNG  
Costumes by ALIAS from designs by COMELLI. Scenery by E. H. RYAN

Master Machinist, A. WILLIAMS. Electric Effects by J. WEBSTER.

Properties by A. WILLIAMS and ALIAS. Wigs by GUSTAVE.

Miss Elise Clerc Miss Julia Seale

Miss Rita Leggiero

Messrs. TOM COVENTRY, MAX MARTINI, E. BELCHER,  
and the full CORPS DE BALLET of the ALHAMBRA THEATRE.

Presented under the personal direction of ALFRED MOUL.

### SCENE—On the Heath.

Arlene	Miss M. SKELLY
Russian Danseuse	Miss ELISE CLERC
Three Sisters Wise and Ta'l	Miss JULIA SEALE
Coster Girl	Miss LILLIE LAURI
Suftagette	Miss ELISE CLERC
Naval Officer	
Showman's Son	Miss JULIA SEALE
Buffet Dancer	Miss RITA LEGGIERO
Scout Leader	Miss L. BRYANT
Little Gipsy	Miss L. CUMMING
Scotch Lassie	Miss A. WELLS
Showman's Wife	Mr. BAXTER
"Simple" Bride	Mr. TOM COVENTRY
"Simple" Bridegroom	Mr. MAX MARTINI
Showman	Mr. BELCHER
Sergeant	
Petty Officer, Explorer	
The Ohm	
"Sal-Oh-My"	
Tarantel's Danced by MISSES BELLIE DAVIS, ANNIE MORTIMER, PATTIE RYDER, FLORRIE ROWE.	
Costers, Boys and Girl Scouts, Lassies, Policemen, Peers and Beauties.	
Suffragettes, Sailors, &c., &c.	

**MATINÉE EVERY SATURDAY AT 2.15**

In accordance with the requirements of the London County Council:

- (a) The public may leave at the end of the performance all exit and entrance doors, and such doors must at that time be open.
- (b) All gangways, passages, and recesses must be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions.
- (c) Persons must not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the intersecting gangways, and if standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, sufficient space must be left for persons to pass easily to and fro.
- (d) The Safety Curtain must be lowered about the middle of the performance so as to ensure its being in proper working order.

Ladies are politely requested to remove their Hats and thus add to the comfort of the audience.  
Gentlemen are respectfully notified that Pipes are not permitted in the Fauteuils or Box Stalls Circle.

**"Scott's"** TOP OF THE HAYMARKET, W.  
Suppers After the  
Theatre.

**"Scott's"** TOP OF THE HAYMARKET, W.  
Suppers After the  
Theatre

# DO JUSTICE TO FINE RECORDS

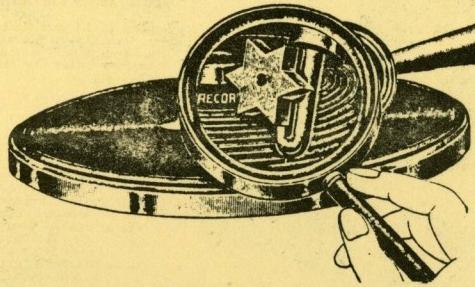
INSURE A LONG LIFE FOR  
YOUR RECORDS BY USING  
THE



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A PERMANENT NEEDLE

**THE NEEDLE WEARS—NOT THE RECORD.**



"Everplay" on record seen through magnifying glass.

IT FITS OR ADAPTS ITSELF TO THE GROOVES OF ALL RECORDS.  
IT CLEARS THE GROOVES OF ALL DUST INSTEAD OF GRINDING IT IN.  
IT PLAYS THE TRUE NOTE ALL THE TIME, NOT SHARP AT THE COMMENCEMENT  
AND FALLING AWAY AT THE END.  
IT IS INSERTED LIKE AN ORDINARY NEEDLE AND MAY BE ADJUSTED FROM  
LOUD TO SOFT TONE.  
THE COST IS 7/6 AND IT LASTS A LIFETIME.

It will play 27,000 records.

**£20 GUARANTEE THAT IT WILL NOT INJURE RECORDS.**

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H. LANGE'S SUCCESSORS, Ltd., 58a, Wells Street, W.